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homemade means they can devise. Production comes first, even at the price of using up the machines. Discipline is severe; negligence or even a few minutes' lateness are strictly punished. No wonder, then, that the bad side of the system outweighs the good in the worker's mind. Still, he dares not complain. If he betrays any signs of discontent the security police, whose secret agents are his coworkers and sometimes his friends, takes care of him.

The wildcat strikes that break out from time to time are no threat in themselves, for peace returns quickly after mass arrests of all participants. They are, however, ominous signs that discontentment has reached a tension that can find release only in desperate acts. A strike requires a certain minimum of organization. That is why nothing else makes Party dialecticians so uneasy. The workers are the only class capable of organized action—that Marxist principle has never been forgotten. No action, however, is possible without leaders. If the leaders reason correctly, that is, if they understand the necessities of the historic process, then the workers as a mass will be unable to protest.

Everything, thus, takes us back to the question of mastery over the mind. Every possible opportunity for education and advancement is offered to the more energetic and active individuals among the workers. The new, incredibly extensive bureaucracy is recruited from among the young people of working-class origin. The road before them is open, open but guarded: their thinking must be based on the firm principles of dialectical materialism. Schools, theaters, films, painting, literature, and the press all shape their thinking.

We should also call attention to a new institution, the "club," whose significance is comparable to that of the chapel in the middle ages. It exists in every factory, ev-

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Germany paid reparations to the extent of 9.8 milliard marks, or 1.7 per cent of the national income. In no year after the first world war did the reparations paid by Germany exceed 4 per cent of the national income. To calculate the burden of these reparations, other criteria besides the national income, such as budget revenue or exports, can be applied. The reparations Germany paid rose from 12.9 per cent of the budget revenue of Germany or 9.9 per cent of the value of its exports in 1924-5, to 25.7 per cent and 18.4 per cent respectively in 1928-9.

With regard to Germany's looting of Europe during the second world war, German official statistics admit that up to 1943 the Reich got from the occupied countries 'special incomes' amounting to 50 milliard marks. British official estimates give a figure of 12.8 milliard dollars for the same period. The two figures thus nearly tally. Nearly all the German robbery took place immediately after the occupation. If we, therefore, assume that the annual looting of the occupied countries by Germany after 1943 was the same as the annual average of 1939 to 1943, we shall certainly not underestimate it: on this basis the total German looting amounted to 20-25 milliard dollars.

A comparison between the reparations paid by Germany after the first world war—about 18 milliard marks or 3.6 milliard dollars—with the 'reparations' that Germany took from Europe in the second world war—20-25 milliard dollars—reveals the increasingly plunderous character of declining capitalism, as exemplified by the Hitler regime.

Russia's attitude to the question of reparations after the second world war was expressed clearly by Prof. Varga in an article published in *War and the Working Class*, 15th October, 1943. He concluded that Germany must pay reparations to the tune of 90 milliard marks or about 22 milliard dollars, and he stated that the Russian government asked in addition for ten million German workers to be sent to Russia for reconstruction work.

A claim for such large reparations, coupled with a demand for ten million workers, i.e., nearly a third of the total German working class, was incompatible with the existence of Germany as an important industrial country. At Yalta, consequently,

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It might yet be claimed that even these differences in income 000
are smaller than those prevailing in the countries of capitalism based on private property. There is not sufficient statistical information about income distribution in the 'People's Democracies' accurately to check this contention, but some general remarks may be made. To compare the ratio between the income of an American capitalist and his workers on the one hand, with the ratio between the incomes of a manager in the 'People's Democracies' and his workers is to compare two qualitatively different things. Let us assume that the American capitalist gets a million dollars' profit, of which he ploughs back into the enterprise 700 thousand dollars. For his personal consumption he thus takes 300,000 dollars. The boss in the enterprise in the 'People's Democracies', on the other hand, would claim that as he does not own the factory the profits ploughed back into the enterprise must not come out of what he gets, but out of the profit made by the whole of society. If the American capitalist argued that the 700,000 he ploughed back was in the interests of society, the communists would reply that he gets the main benefit from it. But it appears that the same argument must not be applied to bureaucratic state capitalism.

Since a group of people in control of the means of production will take for itself the biggest possible share of the national cake, and as under the rule of the Communist Parties the workers are faced with the most concentrated capital, while they lack the right to defend themselves through democratic organisations independent of their rulers or by strike action, the inequality in incomes will inevitably reach its most extreme forms.

The Workers' Resistance

Reference has already been made to the way in which the 468 ●
workers of Czechoslovakia expressed their rising dissatisfaction 475
with the Communist Party leaders by rejecting the official list of candidates to Works Committees in 1947, thus driving the Party to abolish the secret ballot.[1] But the workers found other ways of expressing their dissatisfaction, the most important being greatly increased absenteeism, which reached the proportions of an epidemic in Czechoslovakian industry. At

[1] [See category 116, pp 84-85 -- Analyst]

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468 475 the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Slansky, the General Secretary, disclosed that whereas before the war absenteeism in the foundries totalled 2.4-3.5 per cent, it had risen in January, 1949, to 12 per cent and in March to 15 per cent. The position was even more critical in the building industry: in the four principal building undertakings in the Morawská Ostrawa district alone 53,420 working-shifts had been lost, while another building enterprise at Tábor registered 50 per cent of absentees. (Quoted by *News from Czechoslovakia*, May, 1949). On September 21st, 1949, Premier Zapotocky told the Czechoslovak Trade Union Council that absenteeism among the workers so far that year was already more than 37 per cent higher than in 1947. (*Lidové Noviny*, 22nd September, 1949). Even the National Assembly's decision of 24th March, 1950 to deduct from the holiday days missed without good reason would probably not altogether stop this expression of the increasing 'enthusiasm' of the workers for the regime.

It is not only the Czechoslovak workers who put up some resistance, however limited it must be by the totalitarian character of the regime. *The Times* of 5th September, 1949, gave a report from its correspondent in Budapest of a conference of the Communist Party of Greater Budapest—in which more than 60 per cent of Hungary's industry is concentrated—which was attended by all the foremost leaders of the Party. 'The report (of the Conference) says that productivity is stagnant in most industries and declining in some. Between February and July it fell throughout the manufacturing industry by 17 per cent . . .' 'Far too many workers were applying for sick relief—in a recent week in one factory 11 per cent, in another 12 per cent. Instances are given of self-inflicted wounds'. Rákosi in his speech claimed that in many factories the number of days missed for sick leave was two to three times higher than before the war. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 6th September, 1949). On August 31st, 1949, he said that in the previous few months productivity had fallen by 10-15 per cent.

In Poland an epidemic of absenteeism drove the government to adopt harsh measures. On April 19th, 1950, the Sejm passed a law concerning the 'Socialist discipline of labour.' Extremely heavy punishments are imposed on absentees. A worker who

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has been absent from his work for four or more days in a year without a satisfactory excuse suffers a wage cut of 10-25 per cent which may last for three months. 468 475

The Yugoslav workers also use the weapon of absenteeism in their struggle against their bad conditions. *The Times* of 1st November, 1950, quoting the Belgrade trade union paper *Rad*, said: '. . . absenteeism in the coal mines in Serbia reached 19%; Croatia—17½%; Slovenia—15%; and Bosnia-Herzegovina—14%. The plan allowed for a maximum absenteeism of 11%.' In his speech to the Federal Assembly on 17th April, 1950, Tito said:' In 1949, there was a 26.26% loss in working time. In Croatia, this percentage reached 33%, of which 21% was spent in holiday-taking and absenteeism. This proves the weak struggle for discipline . . . ' The workers also frequently change their place of work. In a speech to the Serbian parliament, Jovan Vesilinov, Vice-Premier of Serbia, reported that during ten months of 1949 state enterprises in Serbia took on 628,064 persons but lost 430,050 workers who had left their jobs. (*The New York Times*, 29th January, 1950). *Borba* of 21st August, 1950, stated that in the Trepcha lead mines and refinery—one of the largest in the world—some 11,000 workers were taken on in 1949, of whom 10,500 left before the end of the year because of very bad conditions, irregular pay 'usually between the fifteenth and twentieth of the month, often between the twenty-fifth and the thirtieth', and the irregular distribution of the rations (in August the rations were distributed ten days late, and in the meantime the workers had to do without bread).

The Government took strong measures to fight against absenteeism and the frequent changes in the place of work. On 26 January, 1950, it passed a decree stating that food ration cards would be withdrawn from persons leaving their place of employment without permission, and no new cards would be issued them. The decree further stated that a clause might be included in labour contracts obliging a worker to reimburse the enterprise for any loss in production resulting from his unjustifiable absenteeism.

Another symptom of the increasing dissatisfaction of the workers is the decline in the *quality* of what they produce. For example, in the speech quoted above, Rákosi stated that the

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468 475 percentage of waste in the Manfred Weiss iron foundry, the second biggest metal factory in Hungary, had risen from 10.4 to 23.5 per cent. In Poland, in 1948, of 67 million tons of coal, 1,100,000 tons were stones; in 1949 the percentage of stones in the coal reached 5 per cent. In 1948 and 1949 a sizeable proportion of the exports of Czechoslovakia—the country with the reputation for products of good quality—was returned as below standard.

The admonitions of the leaders to the workers are often of such a character as to leave no doubt about their indocility. Istvan Kossa, Hungarian Minister of Industry, said in a speech at Debrecen on December 6th, 1948, that 'The workers have assumed a terrorist attitude to the directors of the nationalised industries', and he threatened them with forced labour.

Chivu Stoica, Rumanian Minister of Industry, addressing the workers of the Resita plant, the largest metallurgical establishment in the country, on December 25th, 1948, accused them of not having fulfilled the plan and of being 'capitalist agents'.

In Yugoslavia, Vice-Premier Edvard Kardelj, in his report to the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party (July, 1948), attacked those workers who showed 'resistance to realistic norms, against competition, and on the other hand—in exaggerated demands in regard to pay'. 'It is clear that the consequences of such a stand are a decrease in work discipline, insufficient aid to rationalisers and innovators in the realization and application of their proposals, an incorrect and unfriendly attitude toward the heads of the enterprise, an incorrect attitude toward competitions'. (*The Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the Struggle for New Yugoslavia, for People's Authority and for Socialism*, Belgrade, 1948, pp. 87-8).

466 That the workers nevertheless remain members of the Communist Parties—as the official statistics show—is not because of their enthusiasm for them, but because it is too dangerous to leave. Anyone who leaves the Party faces the threat of economic sanctions (at least). This is shown clearly by some figures issued in October, 1948, by József Révai, editor of *Szabad Nép*, the Hungarian Communist Party daily. He says that the paper is read by only 12 per cent of the Party members. At the big M.A.U.A.G. factories, for example, where 6,000

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out of the 8,000 workers are Party members, only 780 read the Party newspaper. (*For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*! 15th October, 1948). Thus a large number of workers are merely nominal members of the Party.

The large-scale 'purges' in the Parties also express the increasing hostility between the leaders and their 'supporters'. In the 'purge' in Hungary nearly half a million members were expelled from the Party. In Czechoslovakia, there was a 'purge' of a quarter of a million members in 1948 and the first half of 1949. In Rumania, 'over 192,000 hostile elements', that is, over a fifth of the total membership of the Party, were 'purged' between November, 1948, and May, 1950. In Bulgaria, 92,500 members and candidates, out of a total of 442,183, were expelled from the Party between June, 1949 and June, 1950.

While the workers within the 'People's Democracies' cannot express their dissatisfaction through the police-controlled plebiscites, miscalled general elections, those on the other side of the frontier, who are close enough to know the reality of the regime inside the 'People's Democracies', and free enough to express their opinion of it—as in Austria and Berlin—have decisively shown their disapproval.

The Expropriation of the Peasantry

The parvenu ruling class in Eastern Europe, in order to add to its wealth and comfort, devotes all its energy to increasing the number of workers employed in state industries. Hence it comes into conflict with the masses of the peasantry.

As has been pointed out, the progress of agriculture in the Eastern European countries depends on their industrialisation. Their inherited backwardness, their separation from Western Europe by the division of the Continent into two spheres of influence, Russian imperialist exploitation, the greed of the local bureaucracy—all these factors impede the accumulation of capital, necessary for industrialisation. Had industry already existed on a big scale, the countryside would voluntarily have supplied agricultural products to the urban population in exchange for industrial products, and would also have supplied the necessary labour power for industry, as the surplus population would have been attracted to the towns by their higher